dinner pipe, an indispensable part of the meal for them. The children may sometimes not come to the table but eat sitting upon the settle or the hearth seats. They are very silent children. They take little part in the family discussion between older members unless questioned directly.

After dinner the men return to their work. The women begin their household and farmyard tasks anew. The fowl have grown so hungry, meanwhile, that they are invading the kitchen and the woman must "hunt" them out of the house. From what remains of the pot of potatoes (which may often hold as much as forty pounds) she feeds them and feeds, too, the household pets. They eat what the family eats, though meat comes their way only upon special occasions.

This done, the woman's chores for the afternoon are much the same as those of the morning. Another large pot of potatoes, mangels, and turnips must be prepared for the pigs, more milk and grain mixed and fed to the calves, turf brought in for the fire, water fetched from the well, and rooms cleaned and swept, in an endless cycle of activity. Should the routine duties come to a pause, there is still always plenty to do in washing, mending, and knitting the clothes of the household. The woman's hands are never idle.

There is another important daily activity within the house. The great staple, bread, is baked daily into round cakes or loaves upon the "griddle," an iron tripod, on the hearth. The woman may bake at any time during the day and, if necessary, more than once. Even late in the evening, when the whole family is gathered round the fire, her last task may be to bake bread for late evening tea.

After four in the "evening" (as the countryman divides the day), the children arrive from school and must be fed. The woman sits down with them, talking over the happenings of the day, for children are important purveyors of news.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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country "stations"[5] the elder men and women file in for confession and come forward for Communion first. On the road to the shop, to church, or to the fair, the young man must keep pace and the elder may call him to his side.

The relation shows itself best perhaps in the constant discussions that are the breath of life for the countryman. No work is too pressing to prevent the countryman from "stopping on the road to pass the time of day." In the rural community such personal communion is an indispensable bridge across the social and physical space separating farm from farm. In all such discussion it is the elder men who may regulate length and subject of conversation. When groups form in pubs, in one another's houses on evening visits, before and after mass in the churchyard, the enthralling game of presenting argument, choosing sides, directing the flow of talk, belongs to the older men. The young men must listen in. At such times the important news of the countryside disseminates itself. Political judgments are formed, and the ephemeral decisions of daily life are made. In all this the boys are silent listeners. It is a bold young man who enters an opinion of his own.

Second, there is the matter of the contacts of the community with the outside world. The elder men, these same father-owners; represent the interests of the community before priest, schoolmaster, merchant, cattleman, and government official. The younger men hang back, ready to be brought in when the elders want them, listening in and keeping their own counsel. Much of this we have already indicated, but it is necessary to cite it here again in order to round out the picture.

The relation extends to very small matters indeed. The better cup of tea, the bigger piece of bread, the glass of

[5] In country districts remote from the parish church masses are said in the private houses of parishioners once or twice a year in order to allow the performance of Easter or Christmas duty by those confined to their homes through age or sickness or other cause. These are "country stations," important religious events in every townland.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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subsists only because she is a part of the local community. Though she charges a bit more, she spares one the longer walk to the village center.

Country shops are often larger than hers. Sometimes where the distance to the village center is greater, they sell nearly everything one could get in town, outside the specialized drapers' or hardware, boot, and shoe shops. They sell all the farm staples, such as groceries, sugar, flour, tea, and tobacco. Here people may come from two or three miles around. The farmers all know they pay more, but the shop is a convenience. It may get the only newspaper in the district, and men drop in to hear the news. In the evenings a local school of cards may flourish here and the boys foregather.

The country shop reaches its zenith at the crossroad, where a church, a parochial house, a school, and a creamery may stand as well. Here the shop often dates from the days just after the famine and has had a long history of prosperity. In the past generation many such crossroads produced county councillors, and the rewards of public service often meant the acquisition of several rich farms in addition to the shop. The shop serves the surrounding countryside and collects its produce, and it derives its reward from the service it performs.

The position of the country shopkeeper is to be found in his place within the system of relations which make up the community of small farmers behind his shop. His function as economic agent of distribution is only part of his role. He is in a situation which must be described as a perpetual seesaw. If he is drawn too far within the local community, he loses contact with the outside world. If he is drawn too far outward, he loses touch with his customers. He must maintain a balance in a delicate equilibrium.

He is caught within a pattern of mutual obligations to the farmers on the one hand and the social system of the

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

After dinner, work begins anew. For the women chores are much the same as in the morning. Should routine duties come to a pause, there is still plenty to do. Washing, mending, knitting must be done; and their hands are never idle.

The great staple, bread, is baked daily, upon the 'griddle' at the hearth. The women may bake at any time, and even late in the evening when the family is gathered round the fire, their last task may be to bake for supper of bread and tea.

At four in the 'evening', as the countryman divides the day, children arrive from school, to be fed and questioned. For they are important purveyors of news. Later, the men are home from the fields, driving the cattle home, bedding them for the night. The woman must serve supper and milk the cows, bringing the milk in to separate. But though her day is over with the separating, she may not sit idly with the men for long beside the evening's fire. Children, knitting, and baking can still be attended to; tradition and proverb demand that 'one woman in the house be always working'.

Work round house and haggard is continuous; it varies little from season to season. It involves a continuous activity by which the household group orders its life and fulfils its first needs in the midst of a carefully patterned regularity of habit. What variation there is, is itself confined to a narrow range. Certain chores are divided among days of the week, but they show nothing of the swift change

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

561 come forward only when called upon. At country 'stations' the elder men and women file in for confession and come forward for communion first. On the road to shop, church or fair, the young man must keep pace, and the elder may call him to his side.

521 561 The relation shows itself best perhaps in the constant discussions that are the breath of life for the countryman. No work is too pressing to prevent the countryman from 'stopping on the road to pass the time of day'. In the rural community such personal communion is an indispensable bridge across the social and physical space separating farm from farm. In all such discussion it is the elder men who may regulate length and subject of conversation. When groups form, in pubs, in one another's houses on evening visits, before and after mass in the churchyard, the enthralling game of presenting argument, choosing sides, directing the flow of talk, belongs to the older men. The young men must 'listen in'.

[203] At such times the important news of the countryside disseminates itself. Political judgments are formed, and the ephemeral decisions of daily life are made. In all this the 'boys' are silent listeners. It is a bold young man who enters an opinion of his own.

561 571 Then, secondly, there is the matter of the contacts of the community with the outside world. The elder men, these same father-owners, represent

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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Coast guard personnel first were assigned to Inis Beag shortly after the lighthouse was built. Three guardsmen and their families lived in private dwellings in Terrace Village until the large station was erected after 1883 in Low Village, following which the contingent was enlarged to four men. The two-story structure contains four apartments, and these housed the families of the personnel until 1922. Now owned by the Irish Land Commission, two apartments are rented by islanders who sublet them to visitors; a third accommodates the nurse; and the other has been converted into a government sponsored knitting "factory" which employs local girls. One of the several outbuildings of the station contains the breeches buoy apparatus of the Coast Life Saving Service. The life saving company is composed of 15 Inis Beag men, hired and supervised by a branch of the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, and was responsible for the rescue of the freighter's crew in 1960—its only rescue operation since being formed almost 60 years ago. A boathouse was erected on the strand by the coast guard company, and now it serves as an all-purpose building: dance hall, trade school, storage house, and meeting place.

Health services are provided the folk by a nurse, a doctor who lives in a neighboring island, and medical and dental personnel from the mainland who visit the island occasionally for specific examination and treatment purposes. A much renowned mainland woman who lived in Inis Beag intermittently between 1903 and 1923 (and wrote a book about her experiences) was the first nurse to serve the islanders; but since 1932, the Lady Dudley Nursing Scheme of Dublin has maintained "Jubilee Nurses" in Inis Beag continuously, each one serving from one to five years. The nurse is responsible to the doctor, from whom she obtains medicines furnished by the county council, and handles most of the medical cases which arise. Bedridden patients and women who are secretive about their ailments are visited by her during two daily rounds, while after dark she is visited by other patients, mostly men, who are also secretive about their infirmities, and she may be called out on emergencies. The doctor comes to Inis Beag once a month and visits the seriously ill accompanied by the nurse, and in the case of emergencies at other times which cannot be taken care of by her, he is brought over in the lifeboat of the Coast Life Saving Service at her summons.

The post office in High Village is an adjunct to the house of its supervisor, just as the shops are to the homes of their proprietors. The office is a small room with a counter, separating the clerk and her desk and switchboard from those who do business there, and a telephone booth. A radio telephone serves the island and can be used between nine o'clock in the morning and six at night. A line runs to the house of "Number One" of the life saving company, which he alone can use in matters pertaining to the service during the prescribed hours. When the freighter ran aground before dawn, it was discovered by islanders who informed the company; Radio Eireann reported the plight of the vessel, on the basis of S.O.S. messages, in the seven o'clock news, but the company had reached the reef before the telephone was available.

Inis Beag has only a small church, known as the "chapel." After the church of the patron saint was abandoned, a house served as the place of worship for a time, then was superseded by the old chapel whose foundations can be discerned

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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> conditions appraised. . . The community regulates its internal affairs through the *cuaird* as well. It is here public opinion is formulated. There is nothing formal about the decisions made upon the incidents arising from day to day. The local community has no implement with which to enforce its will. But it has the power of gossip and . . boycott (Arensberg and Kimball 1940:190–191).

Decisions of this sort and their sanctions in Inis Beag rest largely in the hands of government officials and the priest, headmaster, and king.

Many folk long have believed that the island needs a council with representatives from each of the four villages serving on it, to foster cooperation and to formulate policies which bear on the welfare of all. After independence in 1922, a move was made to form such a council, but the civil war interrupted the process; since that time, according to the islanders, the opposition of curates and king, none of whom have wanted their vested interests threatened, has succeeded in blocking the formation of such a body. Other forces at work, however, are the lassitude and ambivalence toward authority of the people, and their dislike and jealousy of one another. They complain of the lack of leadership, or of the "wrong" kind of leadership, as in the case of the priest and king; but they are unable or unwilling to expend the energy needed to get themselves organized and "pull together" for the common good. Often those who advocate the formation of a council will, in the next breath, express their dislike or distrust of its potential members, or a desire to remain independent of its collective will should it run contrary to their own. A vacationing emigrant who said, "We have no sense of civic pride and responsibility but think only of ourselves.", assessed the situation accurately.

Among the traits attributed to Inis Beag folk by nativists and primitivists are self-reliance, independence, and individualism. But the self-reliance of the islanders has become undermined increasingly since 1891 by a benevolent government; their independence is severely curtailed by restrictions imposed on them by curate, headmaster, king, and their fellows; and their individualism is a figment of literary imagination disguising a strict conformism. Inis Beag as much as any community is characterized by gossip, ridicule, and opprobrium, which gain their effectiveness as social control mechanisms from the deep concern of the folk with "saving face," and which serve to limit freedom of action and behavioral idiosyncracy. When asked to rank the major deficiencies of island life, the people almost without exception place the prevalence of malicious gossiping, along with poverty and the intrusion of the clergy into secular affairs, at the head of their list.

No matter how much the islanders detest gossiping when they are its victims, they nevertheless welcome every opportunity to engage in it. News of an event passes quickly by word of mouth from Low to Terrace Villages, and variations in the description of the event are usually numerous due to the distortions of rumor. In order to circumvent gossip, parties are organized at the last moment and invitations issued by small boys moving quietly from door to door in the night; persons will leave the island—sometimes to emigrate, visit the hospital with a serious illness, or enter an order—without previous announcement, running from their homes to the strand to board the last canoes for the steamer; and mail is posted just prior to the arrival of the steamer and picked up immediately after it

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591 is carried to the post office, for fear that the postmaster will open letters and talk publicly of their contents (or take money from them). It is customary for boys and young men to hide themselves in the darkness or behind fences in order to overhear conversations of passersby, or witness their misbehavior, which can be reported; this compels folk who move about after dark to conceal their faces and talk in whispers or low tones. When a person hidden in the darkness is accosted suddenly, he will vault a fence, run away, or crouch down and hide his face or draw a [514] raincoat over his head and shoulders to avoid being recognized. Most social events [512] and visiting take place after sundown, so that movements from one house to another will be unobserved.

626 Deviant behavior once learned of assures its perpetrators of becoming the focus of gossip and ridicule. But ridicule seldom is voiced in the presence of the victim; rather, he or she is told of it by relatives and acquaintances who have [538] witnessed or, more commonly, been told of it by others. My ballad not only took [539] advantage of the ubiquity of rumor, but its composition, aided and abetted by two dozen respondents, enabled me to discover the existence of a seldom revealed tradition of satirical balladry, common to the Irish, which has singled out for opprobrium many folk in the past. During three summer visits to Inis Beag following 1960, my wife and I were able to witness the singing of my song publicly. We learned that it, as others of its genre, is sung only before small gatherings, and whether or not it (or certain of its verses) is sung and by whom depends on [123] the makeup of the assembled group. Since ridicule is almost never expressed in the presence of its victim or his kin or close friends, we were able to gain information about kinship relations and factionalism by noting the juxtaposition of balladiers and audiences and which verses were sung.

Courtship and Marriage

582 Marriages are fewer and are entered into later in Ireland than in any other
589 Western country. In 1951, approximately one-third of the men and one-quarter of
162 the women in Ireland between the ages of 55 and 64 years had never married, while two-thirds of the men and two-fifths of the women between 25 and 34 years of age were single. Celibacy and age of marriage figures for Inis Beag approximate those for the rest of peasant Ireland. In a population of 350 persons, 116 are married; 13 are widows; 3 are widowers; and 33 males over 23 years of age and 21 females over 17 are single. Since marriage occurs between the ages of 24 and 45 years for men and 18 and 32 for women, based on statistics extending back to 1911, only 18 men and 9 women (excluding 3 women who, because of physical disabilities, probably never will marry) are eligible for marriage. Not only are 34.4 percent of the males bachelors and 22.6 percent of the females spinsters, but the average marriage age for men in the period 1951 to 1960 was 35.5 years and for women 24.8 (compared to an average for rural Ireland of 34.7
582 years for men and 28.7 for women in 1946). The age span between spouses married during the past half-century ranges from the husband being 21 years older than his wife to 4 years younger, but the average age span has been between 8 and 12 years for each of the five decades. The number of marriages per decade has been

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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772 parts fashioned by human hands. A valley in Inis Thiar is believed to have been created by such a ship passing over the island, "with a great roar and blowing of [173] wind." According to Celtic tradition, souls not only transmigrated to the Land of [825] Youth but became reincarnated on earth or embodied in animals through metempsychosis. The belief in reincarnation appears not to have persisted in Inis Beag, but seals sometimes are thought to be repositories of souls; those creatures so possessed look and act human and attach themselves to fishermen who have aided or harmed them, and whose *curach* they will pursue relentlessly. I was told by an old man of a seal that he had cursed at sea for fouling his net, which later followed in his wake for many miles glaring with rage, and finally pursued him 30 feet onto the strand as he and his frightened mates carried the canoe hurriedly to its cot.

Religion and Personality

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771 It is appropriate here to assess the basic personality structure of Inis Beag islanders, since traits such as sexual puritanism, hypochondria, depression, masochism, conformism, and ambivalence toward authority are linked causally with religion in a very direct manner. Other personality characteristics, already or yet to be considered, which are more peripheral to religion include secretiveness, envy and jealousy, dogmatism, indolence, feelings of inferiority, and verbal skill.

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831 Probably the most prominent trait of Inis Beag (and Irish) personality is sexual puritanism. Its etiology is complex and much debated, but appears to embrace most significantly historical (such as the influence of ascetic monasticism and Jansenism), sociocultural (such as the Oedipus complex and male solidarity), and psychological (such as masochism) variables. How long it has been a major component of Irish national character is conjectural, for it is impossible to appraise with accuracy Irish society, culture, and personality prior to the nineteenth century. [174] Sexual attitudes and behavior in Celtic, medieval, and early modern times can be surmised only from tangential and questionable sources; depending on which sources are quoted, as good a case can be made for sexual puritanism as its opposite before 1800.

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834 The inculcation of sexual puritanism in Inis Beag must be examined in three contexts: informal social controls of the curate and those imposed by the islanders on themselves, the influence of visiting "missions," and enculturation in the home. The first of these has been taken up at length in the last chapter. Suffice it to say here, some folk (especially certain youths who consider themselves "worldly") resent the intrusions of priests and neighbors into their sexual lives. They ask what right have young, virginal, inexperienced, and sexually unknowledgeable curates to give advice and pass judgments in this sphere. Equally resented are those persons who hide themselves in the darkness or behind fences to overhear the conversations of passersby, which may pertain to sexual matters, and those who maintain close scrutiny of visitors during the summer, both day and
831 night, in order to discover them in "compromising" situations. Sexual rumors run
● 203 rife in the island, such as those concerning the "nude" sunbathing of mainland
[609] girls (bared shoulders and lower thighs) and the "attacks" on them at night by

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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boys and young men (attempts to hold their hands or kiss them, while under the influence of stout). Over a dozen efforts on the part of my wife and me to determine the truth behind the most pernicious rumors of this genre revealed sexual phantasy at their core in every case.

Church influence also is exerted through missions which come to Inis Beag every three to five years. On these momentous occasions, two Redemptorist priests (usually, but also Franciscans, Dominicans, and Passionists) spend a week in the island, where they conduct mass each morning and preach long sermons in the chapel every afternoon or early evening. Everyone—even old people and mothers with newborn infants—is urged to attend to receive the "blessings of the mission;" to some this means gaining time out of Purgatory for themselves or a deceased kinsman, while to others absence carries with it the penalty of damnation. A mission usually has a theme whose variations are explored with high emotion and eloquence by the visiting priests in their exhortations. The most common theme is "controlling one's passions," but abstaining from intoxicating drink and maintaining the faith as an emigrant also are addressed. Collections are made by children to support the endeavor, and a list of contributors and their donations is displayed publicly. It is said that a mission creates an emotionally charged atmosphere in the island which continues for weeks after the departure of the clerics.

The seeds of repression are planted early in infancy by parents through instruction supplemented by rewards and punishments, conscious imitation, and unconscious internalization. Although mothers bestow considerable attention and affection on their offspring, particularly on their sons, physical love as manifested in intimate fondling and kissing is rare in Inis Beag. Verbal affection comes to supplant contact affection by the time that the child can walk. Any forms of direct or indirect sexual expression—masturbation, mutual exploration of bodies, use of either standard or slang words relating to sex, and open urination and defecation —are punished severely by word and deed. Care is taken to cover the bodies of infants in the presence of their siblings and outsiders, and sex never is discussed before children of any age. Separation of the sexes starts within the family among siblings in early childhood, and is augmented by separation in almost all segments of adolescent and adult activity. Brothers come to associate mostly with brothers, and sisters with sisters, at play in and near the cottage, traveling to and from school, and in the chapel. Boys and girls are separated to some extent in classrooms and completely in play at recess. During church services, there is a further separation of adult men and women, as well as boys and girls, and each of the four groups leaves the chapel in its turn. Even on the strand during summer months, male tourists and vacationing emigrants tend to bathe at one end and women at the other; some swimmers change into bathing suits there, under towels and dresses "daringly"—a custom practiced elsewhere in Ireland which bespeaks of sexual catharsis.

Parents and their school age offspring read the popular religious journals found in most homes, and many of the articles therein deal with sexual morality of the Irish Catholic variety. Several times my wife inadvertently inquired as to whether or not certain women were pregnant, using that word before children, only to be "hushed" or to have the conversations postponed until the young people could